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Greek Islands in Crisis. Greek Islands in Crisis: Social Vulnerability and the Need for Integrated Territorial Development Strategies

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Abstract

The current study is structured around the relationship between insularity and social vulnerability, while research inevitably focuses on unemployment, youth unemployment, Neets and poverty with specific emphasis to the territorial dimension of poverty and social exclusion. For the latter, general findings at European level are drawn from the ESPON TIPSE Project, the main objective of which was to explore and reveal regional-scale patterns, inequalities and processes and their relationship with each territorial context. Furthermore, by the paper, some local findings are drawn concerning the Greek insular and micro-insular space. The question concerning this space is to what extent blue growth potential can create inclusive prosperity in coastal and island areas and how we can measure and effectively monitor this phenomenon.

Keywords: social vulnerability, crisis, youth unemployment, Neets, territorial strategies



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1. Introduction

The economic crisis had indisputably horizontal social costs in Greece. One could hardly spot a social group which is not hit, within an environment of persistent growth of unemployment (which now concerns more than one quarter of the population), pauperization (approximately 1/3 of the population is under the poverty level) and intensity of social vulnerability. Particularly worrying are the effects of the crisis for the new generation and extremely persistent the question about what is needed to be done. In this context, the paper focuses on the relationship of insularity and social vulnerability, while research lens inevitably focus to questions of unemployment, youth unemployment, Needs and poverty as well as to the territorial dimension of poverty and social exclusion (Kyvelou, 2011)¹.

Regarding social exclusion, not only seems to be missing a clear definition but also a systematic application of the concept in research. As a result, there is a tendency to use poverty as a substitute for social exclusion, thereby undermining the multidimensional nature of exclusion and in particular its emphasis on social and cultural relations (Atkinson and Davoudi, 2000). The European Commission recognizes that the concept of social exclusion *"...is a dynamic concept which refers to both the processes and the subsequent statements Social exclusion does not only mean insufficient income. It goes even further than the participation in working life: it is evident in areas such as housing, education, health and access to services"* (European Commission, 1993: 551).

Social exclusion in relation to poverty is a less specific and a multidimensional concept. It concerns not only income or physical well-being but participation in a number of aspects of what is called «normal citizenship». It is therefore an essentially relational and dynamic concept, it concerns a process. Both poverty and social exclusion are normative concepts, therefore they cannot be separated from the current policy framework.

At European level, a territorial dimension which has been observed at macro-regional level is the relationship between the intensity of poverty between rural and urban areas. It should also be pointed out that poverty and social exclusion is not limited solely to urban areas where vulnerable groups and ethnic minorities are often concentrated in specific neighborhoods.

In underdeveloped, peripheral rural and sparsely populated areas or islands with reduced accessibility, underprivileged social groups often suffer from segregation. For this reason, it is crucial that, in these areas, fair and affordable access exist to services of general interest, to knowledge and mobility in order to achieve social and territorial cohesion (Kyvelou, 2010).

2. Youth unemployment in the insular space

2.1. European framework and the Greek case

The accumulation of elements of social vulnerability in connection with the widening of economic disparities (Wilkinson and Pickett, 2009) directly threatens social cohesion (see Green, Janmaat and Han, 2009: 4 and Green and Janmaat, 2012), and results into the enlargement of the conditions of social exclusion. And this is not only a Greek problem.

Undoubtedly, the youth unemployment correlates with all that is mentioned above. There is no doubt that "during the last decades, serious transformations in economy, production and the labor markets and especially the exponential (in terms of dimensions and consequences) global economic crisis have

¹ For the latter, general findings at European level are drawn from the ESPON TIPSE Project, whose main objective was to explore and reveal regional-scale patterns, inequalities and processes and their relationship with each territorial context.

diversified and more precisely worsen conditions integrating young people into society and the labor market" (Papadakis, 2013: 15).

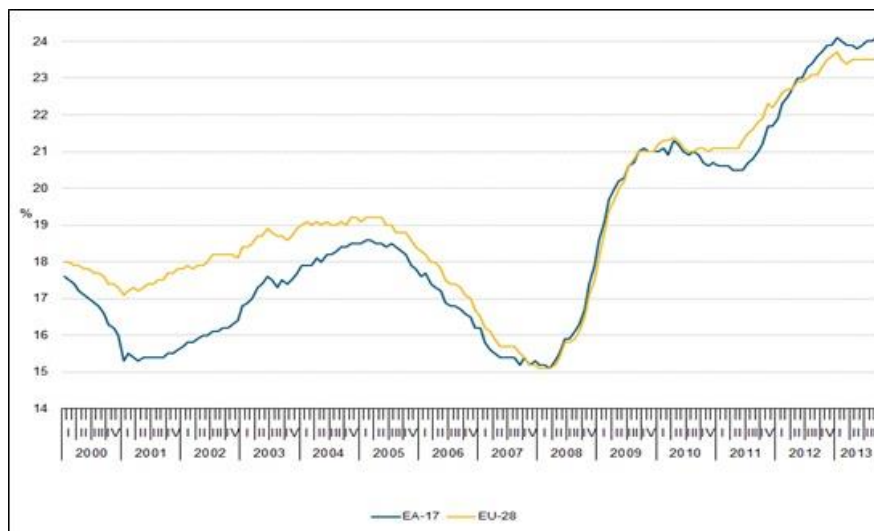
Absolutely indicative is the finding of Eurostat on the dramatic decline of the rate of youth employment per 34 %, in 2011 (Eurofound, 2012: 1) and further per 31.4 % in the first trimester of 2014, which is the lowest rate met in EU-28 since 2002 (we should note that the same rate was achieved on the 1st trimester of 2013)²

At EU level, the situation is reflected more strongly in the youth unemployment rate. Before the start of the crisis, in the EU the percentage of young unemployed was only 12,1% (House of Lords, European Union Committee, 2014: 9), while later it has risen sharply (doubled or tripled in some Member States compared to previous years) by touching, in the midst of the crisis in 2011, 21%, which corresponded to 5.5 million people in the EU, i.e 1.5 million more than in 2007 that is before the recession (see Eurofound, 2012: 1).

It reached a historical maximum in April 2013 (23.8%)³, while showing a slight decline in July 2014, as it fell to 21.6% - a rate that was held steady until September 2014⁴, corresponding to 5.031 million young⁵.

Regarding gender, youth unemployment is 22.4% for men and 21% for women⁶, with premature leaving of the education and training systems to be at higher risk of becoming unemployed and socially marginalized (European Commission, 2013a: 25). It is noteworthy that 40.1% of all premature leaving from education and training are unemployed (European Commission, 2013a: 6)

It is worth remembering the situation regarding youth unemployment from 2000 till 2013. **Figure 1** clearly presents the evolution of youth unemployment, as one of the most important and critical issues of the European Union, with painful consequences in the young workforce.



Source: Eurostat, 2013: see: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Unemployment_statistics

² Eurostat, 2015: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

³ Eurostat, 2014a: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

⁴ Eurostat, 2014b: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6033691/3-31102014-BP-EN.PDF/fb5a7034-d11b-498c-b997-43a691c85c8f>.

⁵ Eurostat, 2014c: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=teilm011&plugin=1>

⁶ Eurostat, 2014a: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>

Figure 1.

Youth Unemployment Rates E.U.-28 and E.A.-17 (Euro Area-17). January 2000-September 2013

In Greece the percentage of young people (15-24) who have become unemployed, was in July 2014, 50.7%, while presenting a decline compared with September 2013 (57.2%), remaining, however, at a very high level. We should just note that in July 2014, 160,000 young people in Greece were unemployed⁷ (see also **Table 1**). The gender gap is also apparent in youth unemployment: with regard to youth unemployment by gender in Greece, and concerning July 2014, women occupied the first place⁸ with a share of 56.7%, followed by men⁹ with 44.6%.

In any case, despite the "competition" between Greece and Spain on the sad primacy in youth unemployment, it is worth noting an apt remark of the Greek Ambassador in the UK K. Mpikas, to which the report of the House of Lords for Youth Unemployment in the EU notably at the EU South attaches a great interpretative weight: "in 1983, youth unemployment in Greece was 23%, while in 1987 Spain has already reached 45%" (*op.cit.* the House of Lords, 2014: 17). Moreover, as to the effects of the crisis, it is worth noting that unemployment in Cyprus being by about 9% in 2008, it reached 41% in 2013 (House of Lords, 2014: 17). It has then decreased to 37.1%, which is the current unemployment rate.

Table 1. Youth unemployment in Europe

	Rates (%)					Number of persons (in thousands)				
	Sep 13	Jun 14	Jul 14	Aug 14	Sep 14	Sep 13	Jun 14	Jul 14	Aug 14	Sep 14
EA18	24.0	23.5	23.4	23.3	23.3	3 553	3 370	3 356	3 342	3 340
EU28	23.5	21.9	21.6	21.6	21.6	5 583	5 080	5 020	4 992	4 988
Belgium	23.2	23.3	23.4	23.4	23.8	96	95	95	95	96
Bulgaria	27.5	23.8	23.0	22.4	22.5	61	48	46	44	44
Czech Republic	18.7	16.8	16.4	15.9	15.1	67	60	58	56	53
Denmark ²	12.8	12.7	12.8	12.5	12.8	56	55	56	56	57
Germany ³	7.9	7.8	7.8	7.7	7.6	351	342	339	336	333
Estonia ⁴	17.3	15.6	13.2	14.9	-	10	8	7	8	-
Ireland	26.0	25.0	25.1	25.0	24.4	55	48	48	47	45
Greece	57.2	50.6	50.7	-	-	182	160	160	-	-
Spain	55.5	53.4	53.9	54.0	53.7	934	849	850	848	852
France	24.8	24.0	24.1	24.2	24.4	693	652	656	657	665
Croatia ⁵	48.6	43.4	41.8	41.8	41.8	73	68	62	62	62
Italy	40.9	43.8	42.9	43.7	42.9	669	703	705	704	698
Cyprus ⁶	39.9	37.0	34.9	34.9	34.9	17	16	15	15	15
Latvia ⁷	23.9	21.6	-	-	-	22	19	-	-	-
Lithuania	21.4	21.8	21.7	21.5	20.6	27	29	29	29	28
Luxembourg	15.5	15.6	15.8	15.5	15.3	3	3	3	3	2
Hungary ⁸	26.4	21.4	21.0	21.0	-	82	70	69	68	-
Malta	12.9	12.5	12.7	12.4	12.2	4	3	4	3	3
Netherlands ⁹	11.7	10.5	10.4	10.1	9.8	167	145	145	140	136
Austria ¹⁰	9.5	9.5	8.9	8.6	9.1	56	55	51	50	53
Poland	27.8	23.4	23.1	22.9	22.6	408	344	333	323	318
Portugal	36.3	36.4	35.5	35.6	35.2	144	133	126	124	123
Romania ¹¹	23.7	24.3	-	-	-	166	160	-	-	-
Slovenia ¹²	20.9	19.1	16.2	16.2	16.2	18	14	11	11	11
Slovakia	33.5	30.1	29.5	29.3	28.5	71	63	61	59	56
Finland ¹³	20.0	20.0	20.0	19.9	19.8	66	65	65	65	65
Sweden ¹⁴	23.1	22.7	22.5	22.4	22.4	154	151	150	150	149
United Kingdom ¹⁵	20.6	16.3	15.8	-	-	943	726	709	-	-
Iceland ¹⁶	10.7	10.0	10.2	10.3	10.3	4	3	3	3	3
Norway ¹⁷	8.8	7.7	7.8	8.5	-	34	28	29	31	-

: Data not available

Source: Eurostat, 2014b: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/6033691/3-31102014-BP-EN.PDF/fb5a7034-d11b-498c-b997-43a691c85c8f>.

⁷ Eurostat, 2014b: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/2995521/5176670/3-30092014-BP-EN.PDF/7e9d2b65-dc8b-4a27-a08c-8cd4702d3da8?version=1.0>

⁸ Eurostat, 2014d: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=teilm021&language=en>

⁹ Eurostat, 2014e: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?tab=table&plugin=1&pcode=teilm021&language=en>

2.2. Youth unemployment in Greek insular territories

Analyzing the current situation of youth unemployment in the islands, we can observe, based on **Table 2**, the following: The youth unemployment in Greece has extremely high quantitative dimensions. The youth unemployment more than doubled during the period 2009-2013, reaching the 2013 maximum rate (58.3 %) ¹⁰. In June 2014 it dropped to 51.5 % and in September of the same year to 50.7 %, as already pointed out. Even if this reduction is important, it does not remove the overall picture, **where one in two young Greeks** is unemployed.

Island regions present, in 2013, the lowest unemployment rates compared to other regions, and even, in some cases with significant differences from the state of unemployment in other regions. It is worth noting that the picture in 2009 was completely different since regional disparities were smaller (except the regions of Epirus and Western Macedonia) and total youth unemployment was less than half of youth unemployment of 2013 ¹¹.

Table 2. Youth unemployment rates (ages 15-24) in Greece (2009-2013) - (in total,%)

REGIONS / YEAR	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Greece	25.7	33.0	44.7	55.3	58.3
Northern Greece	28.6	35.4	50.4	58.4	60.9
Eastern Macedonia. Thrace	30.4	40.1	51.8	53.0	59.4
Central Macedonia	28.0	34.1	51.4	60.7	62.0
Western Macedonia	34.8	35.3	52.7	72.3	70.4
Thessaly	26.6	34.4	46.7	53.7	57.5
Central Greece	29.8	34.7	42.4	56.5	59.8
Epirus	34.7	37.1	48.6	61.1	67.4
Ionian Islands	26.5	35.2	26.2	23.9	51.5
Western Greece	28.8	35.3	45.1	56.8	59.0
Central Greece	32.9	36.9	42.5	58.7	59.5
Peloponnesus	25.8	29.0	39.0	62.3	60.3
Attica	21.9	30.9	43.2	56.0	60.6
Aegean Islands. Crete	22.5	29.6	39.3	43.6	42.9
Northern Aegean	24.6	29.7	43.0	45.8	46.1
Southern Aegean	24.5	28.4	36.8	41.0	37.2
Crete	20.9	30.4	39.8	44.1	45.4

Source : Eurostat, 2014f: see http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database.

Certainly, no island is exempt from the trend of significant growth of youth unemployment within five years (an approximate doubling is observed in three of the four regions), but especially in the South

¹⁰ Eurostat, 2014f:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

¹¹ Eurostat, 2014f:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

Aegean the increase is comparatively less (by 51.8 % from 2009 to 2013). The overall picture is that, excluding the South Aegean, in Greek island regions about **one of two young people is unemployed**¹².

Specifically, individual spatial variations are as follows:

The **Ionian Islands region** is most affected, compared to other island regions. From 2009 to 2013, the youth unemployment increased by 94.3% in the region, reaching 51.5% (from 26.5%). Nevertheless, Ionian Islands is certainly the region where the youth unemployment rates have lower reliability, according to Eurostat¹³.

The **region of Crete** follows, with a percentage of 45.4% that is an increase by 1.3 percentage points compared with the 2012 rate. However, the increase in youth unemployment during the crisis is higher than the equivalent to all island regions (about 117%)¹⁴. In the North Aegean region, youth unemployment increased by 87.4% during the crisis and the 2013 rate reached 46.1% (almost the same as Crete and almost stable compared with the corresponding one of 2012)¹⁵.

The South Aegean region displays, as already pointed out, the best "picture" of all the island regions and any other region of the Greek continent: an increase of 51.8 % since 2009 and a percentage of 37.2 % in 2013. We should not neglect, besides, the significant reduction of 3.8 percentage points compared to 2012¹⁶.

The situation in the South Aegean region regarding youth unemployment is similar to that of unemployment at national level. Lower rates than any other region of the country, better rates than any other island region, smaller growth rates and significant improvement from 2012 to 2013.

It seems that especially in the South Aegean region, the development of tourism is a major bottleneck to unemployment. Obviously, however, even in the case that one in three people is unemployed, this cannot be overlooked. It just could be noted that the South Aegean has crossed with comparatively smaller steps the "threshold of pain" (to use, reframed, a term coming from the strategic studies).

3. Neets (Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training) in Insular Regions

Based on the findings of the survey "Absentees' Barometer: the Neets", the Neets (i.e. young people who are not in education, training or employment) reached, in Greece in early 2013 the percentage of 16.9% (GPO and KEADIK, 2013b: 9), placing Greece, among the first European countries regarding Neets. Latest Eurostat data show that the proportion of Neets has risen to 20.4%. This is a very worrying situation, *"that is directly demanding respond by the grid of public policies in order for them to give credible answers"* (Papadakis, 2013: 19).

It is worth noting that the allocation to Neets, as shown by the survey "Absentees' Barometer", is absolutely correlated with the financial situation of families (GPO and KEADIK, 2013: 24 Pandis and Zag, 2013: 117 and Drakaki, Papadakis, Kyridis, Papargyris, 2014: 246) which confirms the hypothesis of intergenerational transmission of poverty in Greece (Papatheodorou and Papanastasiou, 2010) and simultaneously demonstrates the accumulation of multiple social disadvantage characteristics.

¹² Eurostat, 2014c:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

¹³ Eurostat, 2014c: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

¹⁴ Eurostat, 2014c: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

¹⁵ Eurostat, 2014c: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

¹⁶ Eurostat, 2014c: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/region_cities/regional_statistics/data/database

Among the 13 regions of the country, those which display greater concentration of NEETs (in early 2013) are the South Aegean region, Central Greece and the Ionian Islands (Papargyris 2013: 129-171, Pandis and Zag, 2013: 112 and Papadakis, Kyridis, Papargyris, 2015). On the other hand, very low rates of NEETs compared to the nationwide average are met in the Western Macedonia, Epirus, Thessaly and Attica regions (GPO and KEADIK 2013: 10 and Pandis and Zag 2013: 112).

Neets seem to be concentrated in island regions strongly dominated by the phenomenon of seasonal and temporary employment and their economy is based mainly in the tertiary production sector (namely South Aegean and Ionian Islands regions). The same regions, traditionally, have lower educational indicators and higher school dropout (KANEP / GSEE, 2013, Papadakis, Kyridis and Papargyris, 2015).

In addition, it is evident that the South Aegean Region has the largest accumulation of NEETs population in relation to Greece as a whole (Papargyris, 2013: 160). Thus, even if the South Aegean region presents the lowest percentages regarding youth unemployment, it is particularly burdened by the problem of Neets.

In any case, the islands (Ionian Islands, Southern Aegean, Northern Aegean, Crete; see **Table 3**) appear to have an increased percentage of Neets, a phenomenon that aggravates social vulnerability and results to social exclusion.

Table 3. NEETs' Rates per Administrative Region (early 2013)

Regions	NEETs' rate
Eastern Macedonia and Thrace	17.1%
Central Macedonia	19.1%
Western Macedonia	13.6%
Thessaly	13.7%
Epirus	13.4%
Ionian Islands	20.9%
Western Greece	18.3%
Central Greece	22.2%
Peloponnesus	19.1%
Northern Aegean	15.8%
Southern Aegean	27.4%
Crete	17.1%
Attica	13%
Thessaloniki	14.6%

Source : GPO and KEADIK, 2013: 10, Pandis and Zag 2013: 112.

In the first three prefectures (GPO and KEADIK, 2013 : 10), in Neets rates (in early 2013) we find two insular prefectures. Specifically, the second most burdened prefectures (after Halkidiki with 38.2 %) were, on the one hand, the Prefecture of Zakynthos where 36.6 % of the youth population is Neets and, on the other hand, the Cyclades prefecture with the Neets rate reaching 32.6% (GPO and KEADIK, 2013: 10). This means that in these prefectures, one in three young people are not in education, training or employment, that is they remain outside every main field of care of the Welfare State. High rates of Neets are present in other insular provinces as well, namely in the Dodecanese prefecture (23.9 %) and the Lasithi one (22,4%) (GPO and KEADIK , 2013: 10).

4. What About Unemployment in Total?

As shown in **Table 4** that follows, overall unemployment in Greece remains very high: it reached 26.6 % at the end of the second quarter of 2014 (HELLENIC STATISTICAL AUTHORITY, 2014: 2 and 4) and decreased slightly (26.1 %) at the end of the fourth quarter of 2014 (ELSTAT 2015: 1-2). The situation about the size of the problem becomes even sharper, given that unemployment was 7.8 % in 2008, before the start of the crisis. It is worth noting that the unemployed persons were estimated at 1,245,854 at the end of the fourth trimester of 2014 (ELSTAT 2015: 1-2).

The OECD had estimated that unemployment in Greece would remain at extremely high levels during 2015 (OECD, 2014: 1). And it proved right, since the total unemployment rate reached 24.6%, in September 2015 (Eurostat, 2016).

Regarding unemployment in the islands, we can note the following: at the level of the decentralized administrations, the Aegean (in total) presents the lowest unemployment rate in Greece (see **Table 4** and ELSTAT, 2014: 3). Nevertheless, we should not forget that this is essentially the tourist season during which seasonal employment is enhanced, especially in the islands.

Table 4. Evolution of unemployment rates at the level of decentralized administrations from July 2013 to July 2014

Regional Authority	Period												
	2013						2014						
	7th	8th	9 th	10th	11th	12th	1th	2th	3th	4th	5th	6th	7th
Macedonia-Thrace	30.0	29.5	30.0	29.5	29.9	29.2	28.3	28.2	28.6	28.6	27.5	27.3	27.0
Epirus-Western Macedonia	29.9	29.4	28.9	28.8	28.0	30.1	28.0	28.7	28.4	28.3	27.6	27.4	27.0
Thessaly-Central Greece	26.3	26.7	26.7	26.7	27.6	26.4	26.3	26.3	26.5	26.2	26.2	26.2	26.5
Peloponnese-Western Greece and Ionian Islands	24.5	25.2	25.2	25.3	24.8	26.4	25.7	25.9	25.8	26.4	25.8	26.2	26.4
Attica	28.7	28.5	29.1	29.0	28.9	28.3	28.1	28.1	28.0	27.8	27.4	27.0	26.6
Aegean	22.0	22.9	22.0	24.0	23.3	21.3	25.6	24.0	22.0	23.4	21.1	17.4	19.4
Crete	25.8	28.0	24.7	25.4	26.0	23.7	22.9	22.9	24.4	21.8	23.4	26.1	23.7
Greece in Total	27.8	27.8	28.0	27.8	27.7	27.3	27.2	27.2	27.1	27.1	26.8	26.7	26.4

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014: 3

Furthermore, the summarizing and more detailed **Table 5** (at the level of the administrative regions), allows us to note that unemployment in the North Aegean Region is much higher than in the South Aegean, presenting the rates of 22.7 % and 17.9 % respectively at the end of the second quarter of 2014. Especially in the case of South Aegean, a slight decrease of about 1.9% is being observed yearly (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014: 4).

Comparatively lower is the relevant indicator in the Ionian Islands. The region presented, at the end of the 2nd trimester of 2013, the lowest unemployment rate (16.4%). The latter rose significantly however, that is by 4.7% in a year, which raises serious concerns. Crete presents (during the second trimester of 2014) a comparatively lower unemployment rate in relation to the other regions (except the Aegean and the Ionian), being constantly under the national average (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014: 4) with the exception of August 2013 (ELSTAT 2014: 3). Actually, a slight decrease of 1.3% (Hellenic Statistical Authority, 2014: 4) on a yearly basis was apparent.

Table 5. Unemployment Rates per region

NUTS II Region	2nd Quarter 2013	2nd Quarter 2014
Greece, total	27.3	26.6
Anatoliki Makedonia Thraki (Eastern Macedonia and Thrace)	27.3	23.8
Kentriki Makedonia (Central Macedonia)	30.3	29.4
Dytiki Makedonia (Western Macedonia)	32.6	27.3
Ipeiros (Epirus)	27.2	28.3
Thessalia (Thessaly)	25.6	25.1
Ionioi Nisoi (Ionian Islands)	16.4	21.1
Dytiki Ellas (Western Greece)	28.6	29.9
Stereia Ellas	27.0	26.8
Attiki (Attica)	28.5	27.4
Peloponnissos (Peloponnese)	21.7	23.6
Voreio Aigaio (Northern Aegean)	22.3	22.7
Notio Aigaio (Southern Aegean)	19.8	17.9
Kriti (Crete)	24.1	22.8

Source: Hellenic Statistical Authority, September 2014: 4.

In a first comparative reading, we could argue that the islands appear to be in better situation than the mainland areas. *However, this would conceal that in any case unemployment rates in the islands are particularly high as such.*

5. Territorial Dimension of Poverty and Social Exclusion

The role of space as a determinant of social exclusion is clearer for the rural compared to the urban environment (see ESPON-TIPSE final report 2014). Living in a remote, difficult to access or sparsely populated region is a factor that can aggravate the individual situations of social exclusion. Although individual challenges related to poverty or exposure to social exclusion can be similar in the rural compared to the urban areas, the territorial dimension should not be underestimated. In this sense, socially excluded populations in border areas or in islands suffer from additional problems associated with isolation and difficult accessibility.

The limited access to employment and education, and the lack or inadequacy of the quality of public services are key factors in the deterioration of individual challenges related to social exclusion and poverty in rural and remote areas. Poor or inadequate access to services and facilities, combined with often inadequate or expensive public transport is one of the main features of social exclusion in rural and island areas.

Moreover, widespread austerity policies, which contribute to dilution and concentration of public services due to budget cuts, is a fact that burdens these regions with additional adverse effects. Mobility and energy issues are essential, visible mainly in the case of islands where public transport are scarce, transport costs increase, prices of most goods and fuel prices are increasing, which consequently results to increased heating costs- a serious problem for poor households-.

The new approach to the relationship between space and social relations consists in the view that social relations are constructed over space, and that space plays a role in how social relations are constructed (Massey, 1985; Sayer, 1985). In this sense, it is crucial to direct the attention of policy makers to the idea that **social exclusion is inherently spatial** (at multiple scales) which should be taken into account in any political practice.

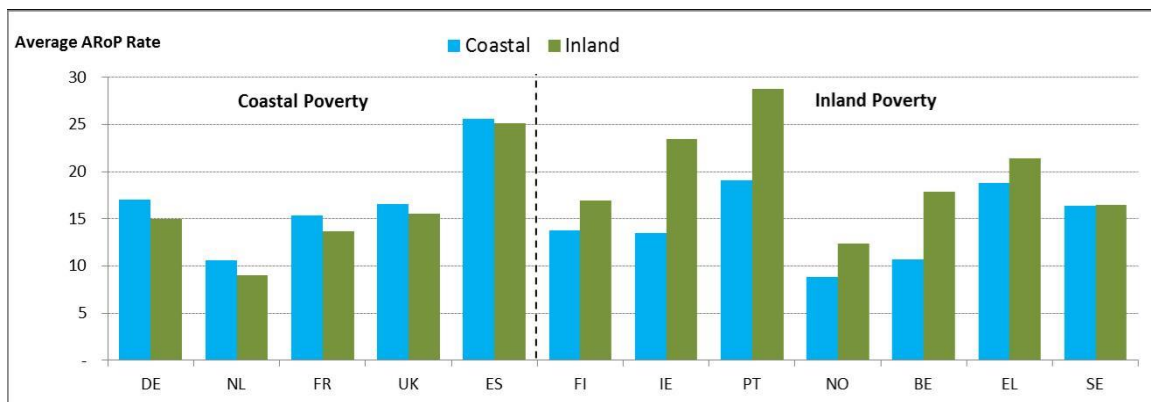
It is necessary to immerse all the aforementioned in recent research findings at European level. Thus, we should note that based on the ESPON typologies at NUTS 3 level, the TIPSE Project «Territorial dimension of poverty and social exclusion», concludes that there is no clear pattern between coastal and inland areas, as far as the proportion of people at risk of poverty (NUTS 3 ARoP Rates) is concerned, as shown in **Figure 2**. Instead, island areas generally tend to have higher poverty rates than those of the mainland, in the same Member State (see **Figure 3**).

Indeed, in the case study of the Western Isles (ESPON TIPSE Final Report, Annex 2), the study refers to the fact that, although the area is rich in marine resources, is a contrasting example of an inclusive development. Elements such as remoteness, increased living costs, reduced competitiveness for entrepreneurship development, external migration, population aging, social exclusion due to high cost of maintaining services of general economic interest, compose the overall landscape of non prosperity and social vulnerability in the region.

Consequently, the question that arises is how such a region, with similar characteristics with many regions throughout the European continent, from the Baltic to the Aegean Sea, could participate in blue growth.

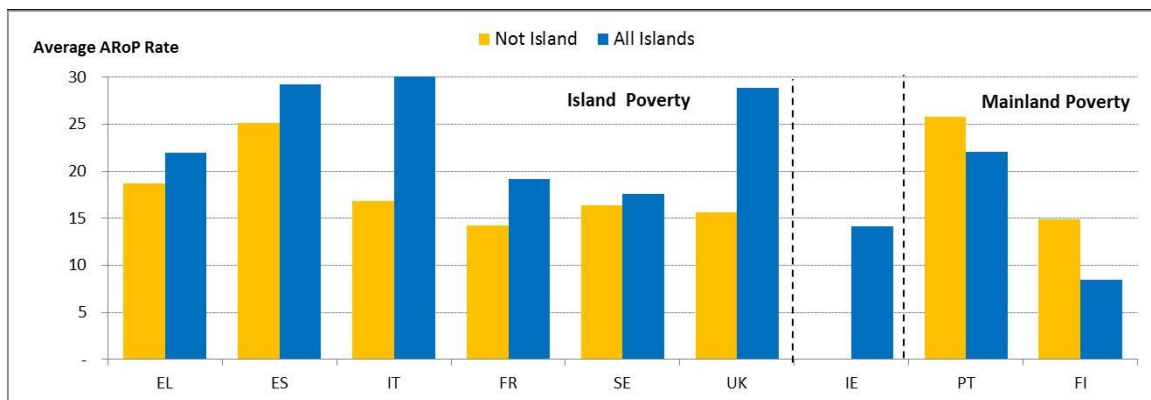
For these regions, we should also put into question the usefulness of traditional indicators, such as the ARoP rate, which is the main poverty monitoring indicator (EU 2020). This indicator measures only income poverty and fails to take account of regional variations in the living costs, while adjustments to the living cost is not adequate. Confirming this claim, the Research «Minimum income standard»¹⁷ shows that island regions can suffer very serious increases in living costs compared to those of the mainland.

¹⁷ The Research "Minimum Income Standard" for the United Kingdom is a great program which produces reports, on a regular basis, on the amount of income that households need to maintain an acceptable standard of living. The Program particularly developed between 2006 and 2008 in collaboration with the «Family Budget Unit» of the University of York, is now prepared entirely by the CRSP (Centre for Research in Social Policy) of the University of Loughborough, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.



Source: ESPON-TIPSE

Figure 2.
At Risk of Poverty Rate, Coastal and Inland Regions, in 12 Member States



Source: ESPON-TIPSE

Figure 3.
At Risk of Poverty Rate, Island and Mainland Regions (in the same member state), in 9 member states.

In summary, taking into account certain general conclusions and findings of the ESPON-TIPSE Project on the island regions of Europe, we should note the following:

The insular or coastal location does not automatically create blue growth potential, which can be blocked by peripheral disadvantages and handicaps.

Many islands and some coastal areas experience very high rates of poverty. Throughout Europe social exclusion may be associated with geographical remoteness or isolation, often exacerbated by poor access to services of general interest (SGI).

Island regions tend to have higher AROp rates than mainland regions.

As regards inclusive growth, the insular poverty is usually masked by the use of an indicator, which does not take into account the regional variations in the living costs or in entrepreneurship.

In the short term, it is important to be aware that the AROp rates (percentage of people at risk of poverty) do not reflect the entire reality of poverty and inequality.

An ideal solution, especially for island and generally remote and isolated areas, is an enhanced EU-SILC (larger samples, more variables in relation to living costs).

6. Is an Antegrated Territorial Strategy Feasible in the Insular Area? - Policy Proposals

6.1 Preamble: Policy recommendations according to ESPON

The aforementioned conclusions must be taken into account in policy design towards addressing social vulnerability and intensity of integration. On the other hand, ESPON¹⁸ is trying to shape research-based policy guidelines which are also taken into account in the following proposals that are structured around the next three axes:

- Identifying areas where policy and in particular cohesion policy should focus to reduce poverty, social vulnerability and social exclusion and areas where there are opportunities to support smart, sustainable and inclusive growth;
- Analyzing the extent to which the areas hit by poverty, social vulnerability and exclusion have common features. For example, are these areas urban or rural, do these regions have higher shares of employment in the primary sector (agriculture) or in the secondary sector (industry)? Do they lack education institutions? Is their demographic situation similar?
- Identifying a comprehensive package of policies to tackle poverty and exclusion in such deprived areas.

6.2. Policy proposals for tackling social vulnerability and promoting inclusion/ integration

To address the problems mentioned in the previous chapters and to create an inclusive development strategy for island regions, individual interventions are insufficient or just a kind of “patchy” solutions. We need an integrated intervention strategy, to build on the added value of the islands and at the same time involve the whole public policy complex.

Obviously this is not an easy task, especially if one takes into account the major social and economic consequences of fiscal adjustment (see, Inter alia, Matsaganis, 2013: 3, OECD 2014: 1 and Hellenic Statistical Authority 2015), coupled with lingering pathologies, structural weaknesses and problems in the labor market and the lack of an integrated production model. Especially the latter is a *conditio sine qua non* for the establishment of a development strategy with compensatory character.

Attempting to contribute to this debate, we will present a set of policy proposals for social vulnerabilities along with a development approach. A roadmap for such an intervention should be based on two major sets of actions: the actions that constitute the strategic environment and those, in the same context, that constitute the parametric environment.

A. Strategic Context

What is required, at the strategic level, is on the one hand, an evidence-based and research-grounded policy making and on the other hand the development of a structured data policy concerning the evolution of social vulnerability in island and coastal areas, as well as the development of integrated,

¹⁸ The mission of the ESPON Program was to support the regional policy in relation to the objective of territorial cohesion and harmonious development of the European territory, first by providing comparable information, documentary evidence, analyzes and scenarios on territorial dynamics and secondly, revealing territorial capital and the development potential of regions and larger territories, thus contributing to European competitiveness, territorial cooperation and sustainable and balanced development.

research-based policy proposals for the reintegration of socially vulnerable groups, with emphasis on young ages.

It is considered necessary to develop a strong database at central level (Ministries of Development, Marine, Education and Employment), which will allow the updated mapping of the quantitative parameters of the local situation, concerning social vulnerability. Especially, the development of a specialized electronic Map Library (GIS) for all the above can provide an updatable multivariate "mapping" of the phenomenon.

The development of a comprehensive and coherent strategy for the development of islands and coastal areas in Greece and the strengthening of their economies, especially in the areas with low growth rates and high overall unemployment and youth unemployment, may include:

A. Strategic planning and targeted investments in the development of an integrated smart specialization strategy or even individualized smart specialization strategies in coastal and island areas, aiming at boosting employment in the areas concerned in 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy¹⁹. In particular, the development of smart specialization strategies for island and coastal areas of Greece can be designed on the basis of differentiated needs and competitive advantages that these territories present²⁰.

B. Upgrading the sector of sustainable fishing, aquaculture and fish farming (see Kyvelou et al., 2014 and European Commission, 2012) by developing a common fisheries policy (maritime spatial planning, integrated coastal zone management, improvement and sharing of expertise, innovative production processes, promotion of products obtained at national and European level). This will contribute to the strengthening of the economic fabric of coastal and island regions in Greece and to reduce youth unemployment by creating new jobs and by absorbing socially vulnerable groups (unemployed, long-term unemployed people, NEETs) that are placed on the margins of society or risk to be socially excluded due to the deterioration of living standards that the economic downturn has brought and to the socio-economic inequalities that inevitably arise from unemployment (see. detailed European Commission, 2013b: 2-10, European Commission 2014: 6-8).

C. Improving accessibility by modernizing both the port and airport hubs and infrastructures and also the coastal shipping in order to create both adequate conditions for the sustainable development of islands and coastal areas in Greece and achieve higher employment rates of both highly skilled and low-skilled young people²¹.

D. Promoting occupational mobility among maritime jobs and further development of maritime skills that are to be used in the future (European Commission, 2014: 9).

E. Creating "zones of social and educational priority" in the municipalities in which education-related indicator is proving to be low and is characterized by high dropout rates, low access rates to higher education and low prices in other socio-economic indicators (e.g. youth unemployment and Neets). It becomes obvious that inequality can only be addressed with targeted inequality, in the direction of redistribution. (See Fotopoulos 2013: 253).

Such action aims at strengthening vulnerable areas and groups, ensuring targeted funding for "infrastructure, teaching staff and school drop-response programs, and programs to cope with low performance, school violence...." (Fotopoulos 2013: 253), but also for wider social and cultural activities (see also Koutouzis, Kyridis, Maloutas, Papadakis, Syrigos, 2012: 10).

¹⁹ See also European Commission, (n.d.):

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/fiche_innovation_en.pdf

²⁰ European Commission, (n.d.): http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/fiche_innovation_en.pdf).

²¹ European Commission, 2015a: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/atlas/programmes/2014-2020/Greece/2014gr16m1op001

All these involve *inter alia*:

- A strong inter-ministerial cooperation on social vulnerability and the creation of a Standing Committee of Experts on social vulnerability and inclusive growth in coastal and island territories;
- Creating strong local networks with the involvement of the local authorities, the social partners and the society at large, the Centers for the Promotion of Employment (KPA/ OAED), related consulting and support services and the educational community (Fotopoulos, 2013: 249 and 257).

Further proposals concern:

An awareness campaign and especially information processes which are necessary in applied social politics (see. Iron and Nagopoulos, 2005). It is crucial to inform young unemployed, long-term unemployed, Neets and other socially vulnerable groups (see. And Fotopoulos 2013: 258) on the possibilities of "return" - reintegration and especially on the opportunities of training and job placement (e.g. about the Lifelong Learning Centers network, about the Centers of employment promotion etc.).

Upgrading of the Lifelong Learning Network, so as to serve as a reliable grid of 'second chance' (see. Papadakis 2003: 51-73, Papadakis 2009: 29-38) and targeted reskilling for socially vulnerable groups (Papadakis and Drakaki 2014). Greece continues to occupy one of the last places at European level concerning participation in Lifelong Learning. In conjunction to the above, we suggest the enrichment of the Lifelong Learning Network with specific and targeted actions for socially vulnerable groups (see. Papadakis and Diamantaki 2007: 147), especially with job related training programs, based on the diagnosis needs and directly linked to employment (Papadakis 2008: 171- 172 Fotopoulos 2013: 255-256 and Papadakis and Drakaki, 2014). These programs should be based on targeted and modularized training (Papadakis 2008: 178 and Bartzakli and Papadakis 2005: 143). This way, the latter can be developed into a powerful active employment policy tool (Papadakis, Kyridis, Pandis and Zagkos 2012: 149 and Papadakis 2009: 29-38).

Furthermore, programs are needed to develop key competences and transversal skills (e.g. on literacy, language and communication, ICT and "digital competence", social skills - see. European Commission 2007: 3, Papadakis 2009b: 216- 217,) on economy, innovation and youth entrepreneurship (social, agricultural, e-business and other forms of coastal and insular entrepreneurship). Modularized programs targeted to the needs of local production and to the local labor markets (including "blue jobs", see European Commission, 2013b: 8) can contribute to achieving the above objectives.

B. Parametrical Context

It is of major importance to use renewable energy sources according to the geography of each coastal and island region and promote blue energy (blue energy generation technologies, such as energy production technologies from wave and tidal waves) (see detailed European Commission, 2012: 6-8).

In order to achieve the objectives related to changing human resource development paradigm and the optimal use of the potential of lifelong learning in the islands, along the lines already described, it is necessary to modernize the lifelong learning network at national level through the use of ICT and Open Educational Resources within the framework of the European Initiative "Digital Agenda for Europe" and "Action 68"²².

It is necessary to modernize VET (vocational education and training) at national level, given both the low participation and the employability of graduates (ISCED 3-4) at national level. For 2013, the

²² European Commission, 2014b: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/content/action-68-member-states-mainstream-elearning-national-policies>

employability of those graduates was only 29.7%, while the European average stood at 69,5% (European Commission, 2014f: 4). Enhancing the quality and effectiveness of vocational education and training system can be a compensatory or even a precautionary measure that will attract especially young people experiencing social vulnerability (see. Fotopoulos 2013: 254). The promotion of training through the «VET roadmap» and the use of statistical and research data on the employability and employment rates is of major importance (European Commission, 2014f : 73-75).

It is critical to resolve the urgent issue of certification of non-formal and informal learning, as well as of the professional rights of those with work experience (see. EOPPEP 2014b: 7- 8 and 10, Papadakis 2014, Fotopoulos 2013: 257, CEDEFOP 2009, CEDEFOP 2013) in line with the already existing National Qualifications Framework (see. EOPPEP 2014 and Dede and Papadakis 2013). This will give them substantial employment opportunities and will promote international mobility (see. EOPPEP, 2014: 3 EOPPEP, 2014b: 10, Papadakis, 2014 and OECD, 2010: 12-13).

Furthermore, a series of major transformations to active employment policies will be necessary.

It is helpful to enhance and promote the "Greek National Coalition for Digital Jobs and Skills" in the islands and in coastal areas. The Hellenic National League within the "Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs" of the EU²³ appeals to young and potential entrepreneurs to improve the quality of digital skills and promote the employability of young people through the acquisition of e-skills, necessary to match supply and demand in the ICT sector²⁴. This Coalition is based on the initiative "Digital Alliance for Women's Employment in Greece" (*Women and Girls Go Digital in Greece*), which promotes female entrepreneurship through ICT, engaging women in the ICT sector professions and a balanced representation of both genders in economic decision-making procedures²⁵.

²³ see European Commission, 2015b: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/grand-coalition-digital-jobs>)

²⁴ European Commission, 2014c: 1-2

²⁵ see European Commission, 2014d: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/grand-coalition-pledge-women-girls-go-digital-greece>



Source: European Commission, 2015b: <http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/digital-jobs>.

Figure 4.
The Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs

Moreover, we should not omit the need for the development of sustainable and quality coastal and maritime tourism (tourism products and services) and the promotion of alternative forms of tourism. The exploitation of European "good practices" for sustainable tourism issues, aiming at an effective management of resources, such as raw materials and water, while providing high quality service from a highly trained manpower could significantly contribute to growth, local employment in coastal and island areas and tackling social disadvantages (European Commission, 2014e: 10, European Commission, 2012: 9-10, European Commission, 2010: 9-11)

Finally, particular emphasis must be given to social entrepreneurship, which is the focal point of the social economy (see in detail: Defourny, 2001). A strategy to promote social entrepreneurship should take into account parameters, such as "social norms, social capital and institutional tradition" (ETAM 2014: 48), so as to be immersed in the social-economic context and at the same time combine profit with maximization of social benefits (see. Commission of the European Communities, 2013). The development of such a strategy requires the regulatory role of the State (in Greece there is already the law 4019/2011 on Social Economy and Entrepreneurship) and both the institutional and financial support of local and regional initiatives.

7. Conclusions

The economic crisis and its impacts have influenced in a multidimensional way the entire social and economic sphere in the islands and in coastal areas. This has been demonstrated in the early chapters of this study. The insular or coastal location does not automatically create blue growth potentials which can be hampered by handicaps and disadvantages related to peripherality and insularity (ESPON-TIPSE, 2014). Many islands and some coastal areas experience very high rates of poverty, but the insular poverty is usually hidden because of the use of an indicator which does not take account of regional variations in the cost of living or entrepreneurship.

A question emerges, *inter alia*, for further research: following the above analysis for the Greek island regions and the presentation of policy proposals towards integrated territorial strategies to mitigate social vulnerability, enhance integration and reveal territorial potentials, to what extent could Blue growth deliver inclusive prosperity in coastal and island regions? And how can this phenomenon be measured and effectively monitored?

Undoubtedly, the policy proposals presented are not a panacea, nor underestimate the parameter of the difficult economic situation and the consequent lack of resources. However, they are irrigated from both international (contextualized) best practices and existing local potentials and capabilities.

In an era of intense social vulnerability, a comprehensive, targeted and multi-level **social inclusion strategy** is more essential than ever and this concerns both the whole country and the specific territories, such as islands and coastal areas.

In order for this strategy to be operational, it should be first multifunctional and organically correlated with a broader development strategy, which should reflect an integrated production model. This is a challenge that emerges from reality itself. And it cannot be left unanswered.

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